



Rustic Roots Sanctuary
St Louis, MO 63138
(858) 717-0070
info@rusticrootssanctuary.org

To Whom It May Concern,

I'm writing today show my support for having Olajuwon Davis' US Probation terminated. I met Olajuwon when he came to work at our small farm in St Louis MO. As a worker he was committed, punctual and a delight to be around. Farm work is not easy and he excelled at each task he was given.

Much to my surprise Olajuwon would become so much more than a worker, he is more like a part of our family. His positive attitude and outlook on life is unique in that he still believes in limitless possibilities and understands outcomes in life are directly related to the choices we make. He has made his share of mistakes and learned the lessons about making better choices deeply.

Olajuwon is a living example of what happens when you take a negative experience and turn it into a powerful positive life lesson. I know he has been working on courses to help youth in need learn from his previous mistake. If given a chance I believe he would lead a program that could transform the lives of many young people.

He is multi-talented and an inspiration to all those he entertains. He is musically gifted and a budding actor. In 2021 he brought his musical talent to the Spanish Lake Farmers Market. He would play weekly to our community and they absolutely loved it.

I feel confident that terminating Olajuwon's probation is the right thing to do. This man has paid his debt and living life to the fullest. He is committed to showing up in the community and giving back. Please give him an opportunity to continue to excel. He has made me proud every day I have known him. You won't find many with a stronger character.

Sincerely,

Janett Lewis 7/14/2022



Rustic Roots Sanctuary

11735 Eckert Ln.
St. Louis, MO 63138
Date: 07/14/2022
Contact: 314-625-8869

C/O Olajuwon Davis - Probation Termination

To whom it concerns,

I am writing in support of Olajuwon Davis. He has been an active participant on the farm since his release in February of 2020. His continued efforts have been valued by all staff members along with the community he has impacted. Olajuwon has volunteered during crop planting, field maintenance, harvest and most of all has brought his talents in the Arts to our weekly farmers market. We have followed his journey and support his efforts, his talents are regularly shared with the community, many come just to see him share his craft and hear his story.

We have formed a family connection with Olajuwon, supporting his efforts in the community and his journey of self discovery. He continues to build on his journey and is actively striving to reach his personal goals while sharing his story. Supporting not only his professional efforts, he is a shining example as a father. His connection to family, friends and community are just a small glimpse in regards to being an example of success and growth. All to often individuals are lost within the system, most of all when integrating back into the main stream. Olajuwon has inspired many with his talents as an artist and inspires many more with his abilities on stage as an actor. He has admittedly accepted his responsibility and has been an example of what is possible when reflecting on his past while striving to pursue his future.

Thank you for taking the time to review this support request. Its my hope that the court sees and possibly has witnessed his progress. Please consider this support letter in effort to terminate Olajuwon's probation. Should you have additional question please don't hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

In service,

Eric Scott

July 24, 2022

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter on behalf of Olajuwon Davis. I met Olajuwon a year ago on a local farm where he was volunteering and spending time with his children. I have watched him grow and utilize all his opportunities to work on his self-development, character and to simply build himself up. The arts have been a great catalyst for him to explore his talents, earn income and to move forward spiritually. I asked Olajuwon one question recently: What is his long-term goal?

"I want to use my talents in the arts to facilitate healing in my community, especially, those affected by the criminal justice system, high risk youth...helping them to discover their purpose"

As a person who has worked with community health for over 20 years, I support those who simply do the work. Approximately a week ago, I attended a play to see him perform. I'd seen him sing and recite poetry but not act. You can see that he loves it; it energizes him. He is actively pursuing his passion and giving back and this is what purpose work is all about. Olajuwon has been clear about his intentions and has taken accountability publicly for his choices in the past. I hope that his "WORK" is considered in assessing his release from probation.

Thank You,
Ms. Konjit Avent
St. Louis, MO

Julia Ho
2833 Lemp Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63118
806-535-4768
julia@solidaritystl.org

July 14th, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

I am excited to offer this character reference letter on behalf of Olajuwon Davis for early termination of his probation. I have been in consistent communication with Olajuwon for over 5 years now through emails and letters while he was incarcerated, to now over two years after his release. I have firsthand observed what a dedicated, honest, and caring person Olajuwon is and how much love he shows his community through his art.

One of the most inspiring things about Olajuwon is his willingness to share his personal story, to be vulnerable and open about his experience so that others may learn from it. Since his release in 2020, right at the beginning of the pandemic, he has dedicated himself fully to his family and community by reconnecting with his children, volunteering with various community projects, learning new skills, and honing his art through music and theater performances. He has a clear vision for his life and is extremely willing to put in the hard work needed to achieve his goals.

As someone who has seen Olajuwon go through so much, I am deeply moved and inspired by his story and excited to see where this new chapter in life will lead him. Ending his probation will open up so many new doors and opportunities for him to reach his full creative potential. I truly hope that he is given that opportunity.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Julia Ho
Solidarity Economy St. Louis
Founder and Executive Director



July 18, 2022

Tari M. Lind
7748 Wild Plum Ave.
University City, MO 63130
(769) 234-2817
tmlind19@gmail.com

To Whom this may concern:

There are always the usual things a person puts in a character letter; the “individual is great and they show lots of promise”. Olajuwon Davis has a different list of qualities that have yet to be outlined. His has strength of love and loyalty that puts you in mind of a person with years of service in the military. He has a dedication to support everyone around him. Most importantly he has a heart of bravery that has him stepping out on faith that many young men coward from.

There have been flaws that a few individuals have preyed upon that placed him in this current situation. For instance; he’s ability to become friends with an individual and not judge them for their wrongs. His level of loyalty is a fault of his because he held a blinder to only wanting to provide for his family. The years lost from his children, mother and family is punishment enough.

The young man before us today has grown in a way that textbooks can't explain. The justice system has a way of removing an individual from all they have, breaks them into little pieces that once they are ever released back into "free society" they have no clue of what life means to them. These past years that Olajuwon had to endure, developed him into a well-rounded individual. The joy and love them he displays is genuine. His heart was not darkened from the lesson he had to learn. The focus I see in him has created an awesome family man. He has continued to work and learn even more. The ability to provide for his children, balance a life in a pandemic and grow in all his areas of passion from music, writing and theatre is a testament to the strength he has.

The world would never be able to compare one man's journey to another. This young man has a story to tell others that will touch their soul. The emotions that are felt when people hear his music and the words spoken in his monologues can be placed in every walk of life there is. Allow his opportunity to grow past the charges that happened to a naïve young man. Allow the path to be granted for bigger and better things. There is someone in the world that needs to learn from his story and know that the world gives second chances to people for them to go and be a better version of themselves. I strongly recommend that his probation is terminated. He is truly someone that has learned from errors and grown passed the immaturity.

Sincerely,
Tari M. Lind

Dr. Richard W. Lind II

7748 Wild Plum Lane St. Louis, MO 63130 - 314.332.7181 - drrichardwlind2@gmail.com

Monday, July 18, 2022

To whom it may concern,

It's my pleasure to offer my unreserved recommendation for Mr. Olajuwon Davis to have his US Probation terminated immediately.

I've known Olajuwon for over many years, having worked with Olajuwon several projects. Mr. Davis shows great leadership and is exceptionally business savvy. For the time I have known Mr. Davis he has always been a man of not just great faith, but also great integrity. His strong work ethic speaks to his great character. Mr. Davis is also resilient and passionate about everything he does, and will work extremely hard to achieve not just his personal goal but his professional goals as well.

I strongly believe if given the opportunity Mr. Davis will far exceed any of your expectations, and become one of the biggest success stories you have ever seen. Which is why again I would to reiterate my support, and recommendation for Mr. Davis in regards to his early termination of US Probation.

If you have any questions regarding Mr. Davis please do not hesitate to either call me at 314-332-7181, or email me at drrichardwlind2@gmail.com. And I will be more than willing to answer any and all questions you have about Mr. Olajuwon Davis.

Sincerely,



Dr. Richard W. Lind II

For Olajuwon Davis

To whom this may concern, my name is Jason Summers. I have known Olajuwon Davis now for eleven years. I met Olajuwon in August 2011, during move-in day at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. I was a resident assistant working in the dorm Olajuwon was staying in. Since our first introduction, I knew that he possessed the personality and drive that would make him successful in life. I remember, meeting a first student who was incredibly optimistic about being in college and was ready to embrace the experience. We would grow to be close during that time, bonding over our love for music and Olajuwon's tremendous talent in writing.

Olajuwon had an infectious personality! He is the type of person that draws people to him and his positive energy would light up the room. Olajuwon is an extremely passionate individual, the kind of person who takes pride in the things he loves and is not shy to share his gifts with the world. Since the beginning, I learned quickly that although he had a passion for making music, his primary passion was providing for his family. At the age of eighteen, I witnessed first hand how we would move heaven and earth to support his then girlfriend (now wife) and their children. This stood out to me! During a time when many of his peers were in college to party, Olajuwon was focused. He was committed to his studies and doing what was necessary to support his family. During the first year of friendship, we would talk for hours at a time about his goals. I am proud to say that despite hardships and setbacks, he has always remained true to those goals and has found ways to make those dreams reality.

One of the other things I learned quickly about him was how committed he was learning! Olajuwon was always asking questions and this made him incredibly coachable. I am 100% certain that his ability to be coachable allows him the ability to reflect on his mistakes and make the necessary adjustments. As a higher education professional now, I work with and mentor students for a living. It is my job to see potential in students and challenge them to reach that potential. It is my desire that all my students have the kind of resilience and perseverance that Olajuwon has. Many students, like Olajuwon, start their college careers with high hopes and dreams. Many struggle to navigate life when issues are present. Over the years, I have watched how he has endured challenges and used opposition to better himself. I am willing to bet my life on the fact that if granted the opportunity, Olajuwon will supercede the expectations he has placed for himself. In my opinion, I believe that he is an example, to all young men who will face hardship and how they can overcome all things if they put their mind and heart to the process.

I stand behind Olajuwon and everything I have shared. If for any reason there are questions about his character, please feel free to reach out via cell phone at 314-397-2373 or email jsummers@loyola.edu.

July, 19 2022

To whom it may concern:

I have known Mr. Davis for 12 years and I can vouch for him, and say that he has been a person of high morals and integrity over the time we have known each other. Mr. Davis is the man that baptized me. I chose him to do this honor because of his high-spirited nature and his understanding of God.

I recently asked Mr. Davis to do the honor of officiating my wedding for the same reason. I trust him with my life. Not purely based on the time that I have known him, I have known many others longer, but because of the pureness of his spirit and intentions. Aside from the legal shortcomings I am aware of I have never witnessed Mr. Davis act outside of the character of a genuinely good person.

Mr. Davis has been there for me personally in my most desperate times of need. He has given me a place to lay my head when I had nowhere else to go. He's offered me food when I had nothing to eat. He supported me for an extended period during one of the most trying times of my life and he had only known me for a short while before inviting me to live in his home.

I can further state that Mr. Davis has been immensely dedicated to all of his family and his work. Mr. Davis is a loving and active father to not only his own biological children but to his non-biological children as well. I can attest to the truth, that it is widely known that Mr. Davis is a loving person toward friends, family, and strangers consistently. He has been known to be helpful and charitable and is a much-loved person by all.

For your information and consideration, I am an elementary school teacher and behavior analyst for a public school district in the state of Missouri. I was introduced to Mr. Davis as a student at the University of Missouri- Kansas City, where we both attended college. I have a degree in surgical technology, liberal arts, education, and behavior science. With that being said, and for what it is worth, Mr. Davis is one of the most intelligent and capable people I've had the honor of meeting int the three decades I have been alive. If anyone deserves a second chance...he does.

Yours faithfully,

Dionte Neal

Olajuwon Davis - Acting Reviews

“Dontrell Who Kissed The Sea” - The Nebraska Rep UN-Lincoln

“Dontrell is a straight-A student. In just three weeks he is set to be at John Hopkins University on a full-ride scholarship. I admired his geeky-smart habit of recording his thoughts on a hand-held recorder in Star Trek-like logging style, with an almost Neil deGrasse Tyson flavor. Olajuwon Davis is a perfect fit for this role. He began working with Himes in the 2008 production of Sarafina. Davis was also part of the award-winning independent film Palacious, written and directed by Sundance Festival Alum, Robert “Bobby” Herrera of Gray Picture.”

(Appearing Locally - November 12 2021)

“Jitney” - Season 45 The Black Rep

“Olajuwon Davis (no relation to J. Samuel Davis) also provides an impressive take on Youngblood – a young military veteran who took up driving to make ends meet as he works to build a life for himself and his family. It is Olajuwon Davis’ first role on The Black Rep stage as a grown man. He was last seen as a youngster in their production of the musical Sarafina back in 2008. And as he flexes his chops in Jitney – particularly the scenes displaying conflict with Himes’ character – Olajuwon Davis further legitimizes the Black Rep as an institution where talent is cultivated as well as displayed.” (St. Louis American Newspaper - May 19 2022)

“The entire cast gives a stellar performances to drive a narrative that is at times dramatic and often funny. Kevin Brown's rich performance as Becker conveyed the deep disappointment and anger toward an adult child who made choices that impacted both of their lives. When he confronts his son, his physical and verbal acting choices express extreme pain and immense disappointment in what his child has become. His performance, combined with those of J. Samuel Davis as Fielding, **Olajuwon Davis as Youngblood**, Edward L. Hill as Doub, and Ron Himes as Turnbo provide both intense drama and flawless comedic timing. Their ensemble work is exceptional and is enhanced by their realistic and believable performances.” (Broadway World St. Louis - May 12 2022)

≡ s t l | p r n p r

 Donate



St. Louis on the Air

After prison, a St. Louis actor returns to the stage in 'Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea'

St. Louis Public Radio | By Danny Wicentowski

Published July 5, 2022 at 5:41 PM CDT

 LISTEN • 25:00



St. Louis Public Radio
The Takeaway





Danny Wicentowski /

After serving time in prison, Olajuwon Davis has taken roles in the Black Rep's "Jitney" and upcoming "Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea."

In 2014, the path of Olajuwon Davis' acting career in St. Louis seemed to be on an unbroken upward trajectory. But while he had managed to land notable roles on stage and screen, his life was spiraling out of control.

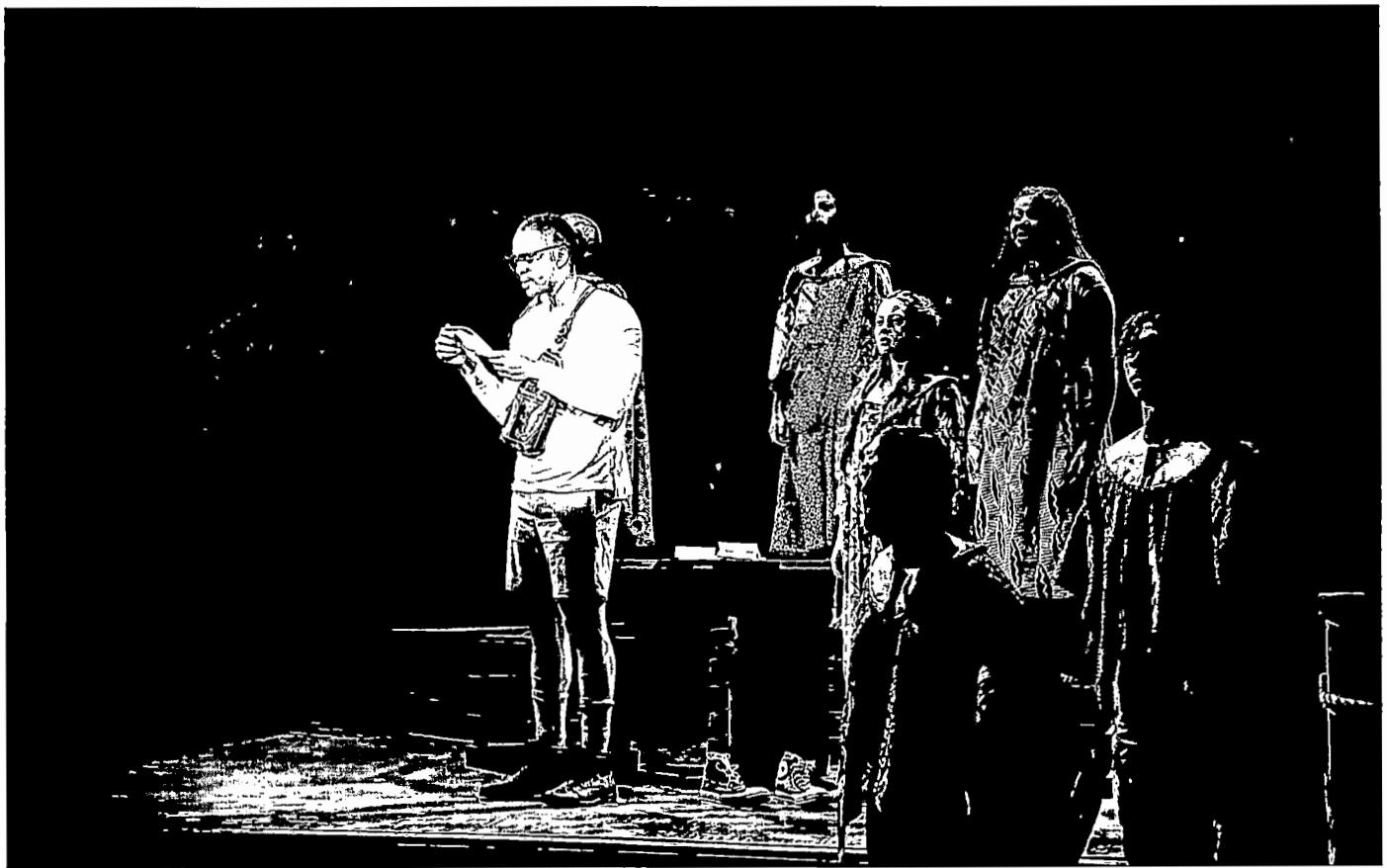
"I was really searching for my identity, trying to figure out who I was in the grand scheme of things, and figuring out what role that I would play," Davis said during Tuesday's *St. Louis on the Air*.

That search led Davis down a twisting path. He adopted the beliefs of the "sovereign citizen" movement, alienating his friends and family members by insisting he was not subject to laws or taxes. In the maelstrom of the Ferguson protests after the police killing of Michael Brown,

Davis joined a local chapter of the New Black Panther Party. His beliefs grew more extreme.

"It was about searching for power, trying to search for some confidence, and, you know, a way out," he recalled. "Eventually, that did lead me to meeting these individuals who I assumed were my friends, or allies in this struggle."

As it turned out, they were neither. Davis later learned that two members of the New Black Panthers — his supposed allies — were informants for the FBI. The informants connected Davis to a man they said could provide a pipe bomb, though in reality both the bomb-seller and the bomb were part of the FBI's ruse.



Black Rep /

Davis debuted as Dontrell in "Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea" at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2021. In the show's St. Louis run, opening July 6, Davis plays Dontrell's father.

Davis' arrest, coming just days before a grand jury in St. Louis County announced the decision not to indict Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson in Brown's killing, landed the once-promising actor in federal prison.

"They were actors," Davis says now, referring to the informants who built the FBI's case against him.

"I had no intentions of committing any acts of violence," he added. "I essentially fell for the trap."

Davis' arrest shocked his mentors and colleagues in St. Louis' theater community. Among them was Ron Himes, the founder of St. Louis' Black Rep, who had directed a teenage Davis in a 2008 production of "Sarafina."



Danny Wicentowski /

Black Rep founder Ron Himes recalled being shocked at the news of Davis' arrest. "It was not the Olajuwon Davis who I had known."

"I couldn't believe it. It was not the Olajuwon Davis who I had known, who I knew, who I worked with," Himes said on Thursday. "As soon as he was released, he reached out to me. And I told him that his place was still here with me, his place was still here at the Black Rep."

And that when he was ready to come back, we could start working again."

Davis was released from prison in early 2020. Today, he no longer identifies as a Black Panther or sovereign citizen but is back doing what he loves, performing on a stage. In November, Davis made his post-prison return to the stage in "Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea" at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The play, which opens in St. Louis on July 6, follows a young Black man who embarks on a dreamlike journey into his family's past.

When the show opened in Nebraska last fall, Davis played Dontrell. In St. Louis, he'll play Dontrell's father.

The roles resonate deeply with Davis.

"I, too, have had dreams," he said. "I have been inspired and moved by my connection to my ancestors. And that shakes you up. A lot of times, it doesn't make sense to those around you. And sometimes it didn't make sense to me. But I made those decisions."

Davis added: "But I feel like I'm back on the path that was destined for me, and it is here with the Black Rep. It is here in the arts and utilizing the gifts that have been given."

Related Events

What: [Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea](#)

When: July 6-23

Where: Edison Theatre 6465 Forsyth Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63105

"St. Louis on the Air" brings you the stories of St. Louis and the people who live, work and create in our region. The show is produced by [Emily Woodbury](#), [Danny Wicentowski](#), [Miya Norfleet](#) and [Alex Heuer](#). Avery Rogers is our production assistant. The audio engineer is [Aaron Doerr](#).

Tags

St. Louis on the Air

The Black Rep

Theater

Arts

Performing Arts





Danny Wicentowski

Danny Wicentowski is a producer for "St. Louis on the Air."

See stories by Danny Wicentowski

Sign up for our newsletter, Off Mic.

Every Monday, producer Danny Wicentowski shares his thoughts on recent St. Louis on the Air conversations as well as a schedule of upcoming shows and ways for you to add your voice to them.

Email *

Submit